

have the effect of a series of moral estimates of the persons whose actions he records ; now, if he believes that a Judge of the world will come at length, and pronounce on the very characters that his work adjudges, it is one of the plainest dictates of good sense, that all the awards of the historian should be faithfully coincident with the judgments which may be expected ultimately from that supreme authority. Those distinctions of character which the historian applauds as virtues, or censures as vices, should be exactly the same qualities, which the language already heard from that Judge certifies us that he will approve or condemn. It is worse than foolish to erect a literary court of morals and human character, of which the maxims, the language, the decisions, and the judges, will be equally the objects of contempt before Him, whose intelligence will instantly distinguish and place in light the right and the wrong of all time. What a wretched abasement will overwhelm on that day some of the pompous historians, who were called by others, and accounted by themselves, the high authoritative censors of an age, and whose verdict was to fix on each name perpetual honour or infamy, if they shall find many of the questions and the decisions of that tribunal proceed on principles which they would have been ashamed to apply, or never took the trouble to understand ! How will they be confounded, if some of the men whom they had extolled, are consigned to ignominy, and some that they had despised, are applauded by the voice at which the world will tremble and be silent ! But such a sad humiliation may, I think, be apprehended for many of the historians, by every serious Christian reader who shall take the hint of this subject along with him through their works. He will not seldom feel that the writers seem uninformed, while they remark and decide on actions and characters, that a final Lawgiver has come from heaven, or that he will come, or on what account he will come, yet once more. Their very diction often abjures the plain Christian denominations of good and evil ; nor do I need to recount the specious and fallacious terms which they have employed in their place. How then can a mind which learns to think in *their* manner, learn at the same time to think in *his* from whom it will, however, be found no Tight matter to have dissented, when his judgment shall be declared for the last time in this world ?